

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KHARTO 01400 151739Z

42

ACTION SS-25

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O 151725Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1714

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1400

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, ET, SU

SUBJECT: NIMEIRI CRITICAL EPMG INTENTION RE ERITREA

1. DURING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIMEIRI MAY 15, I REFERRED TO FONMIN MAKKAU'S APPROACH EARLIER IN DAY RE PROPOSED ETHIOPIAN MARCH INTO ERITREA (SEPTTEL). NIMEIRI IMMEDIATELY CHARACTERIZED THE IDEA AS A "MAD PLAN". HE CLAIMED THAT GOS HAS A COPY OF WHAT HE CALLED EPMG'S "STRATEGIC PLAN". THIS ALLEGEDLY CALLS FOR ETHIOPIANS TO SEEK ARMS FROM BOTH EAST AND WEST AND TRY TO PLAY OFF ONE SIDE AGAINST OTHER, WHILE USING FORCE TO RESOLVE THE ERITREAN ISSUE. NIMEIRI THOUGHT THAT THE LATTER WOULD NOT WORK. ITS FAILURE WOULD, MOREOVER, HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ADDIS REGIME.

2. I BRIEFED NIMEIRI RE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT (STATE 119336) AND REMINDED HIM WE HAD GIVEN QUIET SUPPORT TO HIS OWN MEDIATION INITIATIVE.

3. COMMENT. THOUGH MORE RELAXED THAN MAKKAU, NIMEIRI ALSO REFLECTED SERIOUS CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS FOR SUDAN OF REPORTED ETHIOPIAN ARMED CIVILIAN MARCH INTO ERITREA. BREWER

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